

What is claimed is:

1. A printing system comprising:
  - an instant message server configured to process data received using instant message protocol;
  - 5 an instant message printer application associated with the instant message server and configured to translate print data received in instant message protocol into a printable format; and
    - a printer associated with the instant message printer application, and configured to print the translated print data.

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2. The system of claim 1, wherein the printer includes a processor and memory, wherein the memory includes, stored thereupon, and executable by the processor, logic that acts as the instant message printer application.

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3. The system of claim 1, further comprising a device having a processor circuit and memory coupled with the network and configured to communicate with both the instant message server and the printer, wherein the memory includes, stored thereupon, and executable by the processor, logic that acts as the instant message printer application.

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4. The system of claim 1, wherein the instant message server is configured to communicate with the printer and the instant message server includes a processor and memory, wherein the memory includes, stored thereupon, and executable by the processor, logic that acts as the instant message printer application.

- 25 5. The system of claim 1, wherein the instant message printer application is configured to extract print data from an instant message, and to format the extracted print data for printing.

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6. The system of claim 1, wherein the instant message printer application is configured to extract a data reference from an instant message, and to retrieve referenced data from a file server.

5 7. The system of claim 6, wherein the file server is a remote file server.

10 8. The system of claim 1, further comprising a mobile device having a print application configured to communicate with the instant message server using instant message protocol.

9. The system of claim 8, wherein the mobile device is configured to send an instant message print request including print data.

15 10. The system of claim 9, wherein the print data includes a document.

11. The system of claim 9, wherein the print data includes document retrieval information configured to enable the instant message printer application to retrieve a document for printing.

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12. An instant messaging system comprising:

an instant message server configured to process data using instant message protocol; and

25 an instant message printer application configured to translate print data received in instant message protocol into a printable format, and to forward the print data in the printable format to print hardware for printing.

13. An instant message enabled printer comprising:  
a communications interface configured to transmit and receive data using  
instant message protocol;  
an instant message printer application configured to translate print data  
5 received in instant message protocol into a printable format, and to forward the  
print data in a printable format; and  
print hardware configured to receive print data forwarded from the instant  
message printer application, and to print a document from the forwarded print  
data.

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14. A method of locating available printers comprising:  
receiving a print discover instant message from a device via a network;  
generating a printer list response instant message from a printer list  
database including destination addresses of all printers configured to process  
15 instant message print requests; and  
transmitting the printer list response instant message to the device via the  
network.

16. The method of claim 14, further comprising:  
20 receiving a printer registration instant message containing the destination  
address of at least one printer configured to process instant message print  
requests; and  
updating the printer list database by adding the destination address of the  
at least one printer.

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17. The method of claim 15, wherein the printer registration instant  
message originates from a print server and includes plural printer destination  
addresses.

- 30 18. The method of claim 15, wherein the printer registration instant  
message originates from a printer.

18. A method of processing a document print request comprising:  
receiving an instant message print request from a requesting device via a  
network, the instant message print request containing document identification  
data and a destination address on the network;

- 5 generating a response instant message, with at least one associated  
document, in response to the instant message print request; and  
transmitting the response instant message to the destination address on  
the network.

10 19. The method of claim 18, wherein the response instant message  
includes document retrieval information enabling an instant message printer  
application to retrieve print content, in a printable format, from a file server for  
printing.

15 20. The method of claim 19, further comprising:  
parsing document retrieval information from the response instant  
message;  
forwarding the document retrieval information to an instant message  
printer application where the print content is retrieved from a file server; and  
20 delivering the retrieved print content to a printer.

21. The method of claim 18, wherein the response instant message  
includes the at least one associated document, and wherein the at least one  
associated document includes print content.

25 22. The method of claim 21, further including delivering the print  
content to a printer in a printable format.

30 23. The method of claim 21, wherein the print content is in a multi-  
purpose internet mail extensions format.

24. A method of sending a print job from a mobile device, the method comprising:

locating an instant message server;

sending a print subscription request to the instant message server;

5 receiving a printer list from the instant message server, identifying printers that are available for printing using instant message print requests; and sending an instant message print request to a selected printer from the printer list.

10 25. The method of claim 24, wherein the instant message server is associated with a domain name server.

15 26. The method of claim 24, further comprising receiving a print request status instant message from the selected printer, indicating the status of the print request.

27. A method of printing a document requested via instant messaging protocol, the method comprising:

20 receiving an instant message print request from an instant message compatible device;

parsing content information from the instant message print request; and

printing print content using the parsed content information.

25 28. The method of claim 27 further comprising sending a registration message to an instant message server indicating a printer is available for printing via instant message protocol.

30 29. The method of claim 27, further comprising sending an instant message to the instant message compatible device containing the status of the instant message print request.

30. The method of claim 27, wherein parsing content information from the instant message includes:

identifying print content within the instant message;  
identifying referenced print content within the instant message;  
5 retrieving the identified referenced print content; and  
translating the identified print content and the retrieved identified referenced print content into a printable format.

31. The method of claim 30, wherein printing content using the parsed  
10 content information includes forwarding translated print content to a network printer.

32. An instant messaging system comprising:  
means for processing data using instant message protocol; and  
15 means for translating print data received in instant message protocol into a printable format, and means for forwarding the print data in the printable format to print hardware for printing.

33. An instant message enabled printer comprising:
  - a means for communication configured to transmit and receive data using instant message protocol;
  - a means for translating print data received in instant message protocol into a printable format, and forwarding the print data in a printable format; and
  - means for receiving print data forwarded from the instant message printer application, and printing a document from the forwarded print data.
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